

AFRC COMMANDER'S CALL TOPICS FOR APRIL 2003

1. Air Force Reserve Command commanders at all levels are required to conduct commander's call personally on a scheduled basis, normally monthly or quarterly though monthly is highly encouraged. Unit public affairs officers should distribute local, AFRC and Air Force commander's call topics to squadron commanders. The following Air Force Reserve Command commander's call topics are provided for April 2003:

a. **TRICARE CHANGE:** Families of reservists mobilized for more than 30 consecutive days may now opt for the military's best form of healthcare insurance. In the past, reservists had to be placed on military orders for 179 days or more for their families to get TRICARE Prime, the most advanced form and lowest cost healthcare insurance, which includes preventive health care, no deductibles, no enrollment fees and no cost-shares. If reservists were activated for less than 179 days, their families were automatically covered under TRICARE Standard or TRICARE Extra without having to send enrollment forms to TRICARE. The change took effect March 10.

b. **PENDING CHANGE:** In the near future, families who live with their military sponsors at the time of their mobilization will be eligible for TRICARE Prime Remote when the mobilized reservists deploy outside the area. Families lose their eligibility for TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Prime Remote for Active-Duty Family Members coverage when reservists deploy outside the immediate area, so officials in the TRICARE Management Activity are working to implement the change. In the future, families will still have to "reside with" the reservists at the time of mobilization to qualify for TRICARE Prime Remote for Active-Duty Family Member coverage, which allows them to obtain medical care 50 miles or more from a military medical treatment facility.

c. **TOTAL FORCE EFFORT:** Since the start of the war in Iraq, four out of five Air Force Reserve Command's unit reservists mobilized either are helping move troops, equipment and cargo to the Middle East or supporting the operation by performing other missions. "AFRC provides mission-capable assets and personnel to meet warfighter mission objectives by supporting gaining major commands," said Lt. Col. John Metz, chief of the war and mobilizations plans branch at Headquarters AFRC. "Orders for reservists are cut for a year; however, there is an option for the secretary of defense to extend those orders an additional year. Everyone from personnelists, services, maintenance, security forces, medical, special forces, cargo and civil engineering units are being utilized. No Air Force specialty code is out of reach to be called to active duty and mobilized at this point."

d. **CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY:** The close relationships Air Force Reserve Command has maintained with its members, their families and their employers are key to the command's ability to deal with the global war on terrorism. Maj. Gen. John J. Batbie Jr., AFRC vice commander, emphasized this point in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee subcommittee on military personnel March 19. The general told committee members the reserve component has been working over the past 12 years to improve its relationship with servicemembers and their families, helping them deal with the stress of deployment. "Since Desert Storm, we have added ... full-time folks and part-time people we can call up," he said. "Last year we called up 29 family support people to manage some of those issues. We decided to team up the medical, family support and chaplain people to be there when those deployed to Afghanistan started coming home – to be there should any issues pop up."

e. **PRESIDENT'S BUDGET:** The president's proposed defense budget for next year seeks \$3.5 billion in funding and an end-strength of 75,800 reservists for Air Force Reserve Command. The fiscal 2004 request, which covers the fiscal year starting Oct. 1, 2003, asks for 200 more Air Force reservists. Senior Department of Defense officials

announced the overall defense budget request of \$380 billion in January. The Air Force is to get \$93.5 billion.

f. **SPLIT TRAINING OPTION:** Starting in mid-April, new recruits in Air Force Reserve Command will be able to complete basic military training and drill with their unit for months before beginning technical school training. In some cases, non-prior service applicants have had to decide on being on hold for basic training and technical training for a long, extended period or opting to look elsewhere for a possible military career. With the Split Training Option, Air Force Reserve recruiters, at the discretion of wing commanders, may offer an STO to people who have never been in the military. The option will allow military newcomers to attend basic training and become familiar with their unit before going to technical training at a later date.

g. **FATAL CRASH:** An instructor pilot assigned to Air Force Reserve Command's 100th Flying Training Squadron was killed March 19 after his T-38 Talon crashed at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, at approximately 4 p.m. The pilot, Maj. Pete Jahns, was pronounced dead at 4:52 p.m. at Brooke Army Medical Center. The second pilot, Lt. Col. Frank Gebert, survived the crash, apparently with no significant injuries. As a precautionary measure, he was transported to Wilford Hall Medical Center at nearby Lackland Air Force Base for treatment and observation.

h. **AMONG BEST IN DOD –** The 910th Airlift Wing, Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, has the top family readiness program in Air Force Reserve Command. Thomas F. Hall, assistant defense secretary for reserve affairs, honored the AFRC unit along with representatives from the five other armed forces reserve components during a Pentagon ceremony Feb. 14. The Youngstown unit provides support for active-duty, reserve and National Guard units in the region. A guiding principle of the program has been that family readiness is important through each phase of the deployment cycle.

i. **SUPPLY AND FUELS:** Six people from Dover Air Force Base, Del., and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., showed how resourceful they are by winning more than half of Air Force Reserve Command's supply and fuels individual awards for 2002.

Award winners from Dover's 512th Airlift Wing are Senior Airman Linda McMahan, junior supply technician; Staff Sgt. Michael W. Higdon, senior fuels technician; and Master Sgt. Michael S. Francisco, supply superintendent.

Top people from Seymour Johnson's 916th Air Refueling Wing are Senior Airman Brandi L. Atkinson, junior fuels technician; Staff Sgt. Tiffany D. Bryant, senior supply technician; and Barbara J. Behrend, junior supply manager.

Other award winners announced March 7 by Headquarters AFRC's supply division include:

- Marilyn Olson, 4th Air Force, March Air Reserve Base, Calif. – staff junior manager;
- Senior Master Sgt. James D. Holland, 301st Fighter Wing, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas – fuels superintendent; and
- Rodger Boyt, 482nd FW, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla. – fuels civilian technician.

Senior Master Sgt. Lesia Tillery and Maj. David G. Ellgass of the Headquarters AFRC supply division were named the staff supply NCO and officer, respectively.

The 11 award winners are representing the command in the Air Force supply and fuels competition. Results of that competition are expected to be announced in mid-April.

2. The showing of Air Force Television News and Citizen Airman Video are highly encouraged. AFTN is produced twice a month. It contains a 28:26 full-length version, followed by a 10-14 minute capsule version, which may be more suitable for commander's call, at the end of each VHS copy. People who want to obtain a tape or resolve a problem may contact AFTN by e-mail at aftvnews@afnews.af.mil or by phone

at DSN 945-1363 or (210) 925-1363. The 10- to 15-minute Citizen Airman Video, which is produced quarterly, features comments by Air Force Reserve Command senior leadership and news clips from around the command. Citizen Airman Video is mailed to public affairs offices, wing command chief master sergeants, reserve general officers, military schools and other requesters.